

New York City/~~New Jersey~~

New York City is the place of origin for organized crime in the United States. Currently, there are five families in the New York City outfit of La Cosa Nostra. This page will give background information on each of the five families. First of all, the five families are Gambino, Genovese, Colombo, Bonanno, and Luchese. These names come from Joe Valachi. He was a low ranking soldier who was the first man to break the omerta, or code of silence. The family names come from him, because he testified as to who the bosses were of the five families at the time of his arrest in 1959. The only difference is the Colombo family. It was under the control of Joe Profaci in 1959, but Joe Colombo became famous in the 1960's and therefore, his name has been used to identify the family since then.

GAMBINO

The first boss of the Gambino family was Salvatore D'Aquila. He was the boss of Bosses until he was murdered in October, 1928, in Brooklyn, NY. He was succeeded by Frank Scalise, who was in control until 1931. Vincent Mangano represented stability for the family as he was in control from 1931 to 1951. Albert Anastasia took over in 1951 and ruled until his murder in a barbershop in 1957. He formed Murder, Inc., the group that killed an estimated 400 people in his time as boss of the family. Anastasia's sanity began to be questioned by other members of the family. This led to his murder by the Gallo brothers, Larry and Joe, in a hotel barbershop. Carlo Gambino took over in 1957 and ruled until 1976. He is generally known as the best boss of the family. He tried to keep a low profile. He was not a man who like his name in the papers. This helped when some of the other wiseguys in the city were always on the front page of the New York Times. Carlo Gambino turned the family into the most profitable one in the city. Gambino never served a day of jailtime in his life. When Carlo was on his deathbed in 1976, he chose Paul Castellano to succeed him. Castellano was Carlo's cousin, and brother in law, so Carlo thought it was a good choice to let Paul take over. This move upset Aniello "Neil" Dellacroce, who had been family underboss since 1965. Dellacroce thought that he would be taking over the family, but he obeyed Gambino's wishes and was rewarded by Castellano by remaining in the number two spot in the family. Paul Castellano was regarded as more of a businessman than a gangster. Castellano lived in his mansion on Todt Hill on Staten Island, where he rarely ventured out into the city. The soldiers and captains in the family began to resent this. They felt that Castellano was losing touch with them. In 1985, Paul Castellano and his bodyguard, Tommy Bilotti, were assassinated in front of Sparks Steak House in NYC in a move that was orchestrated by Gambino capo John Gotti. Gotti's mentor, Dellacroce, had died two weeks before the assassination. Gotti had waited for Dellacroce to die so he could take out Castellano. Gotti then took control of the family and was known as the "teflon don" for his acquittal in three separate trials in the late 1980's. In 1991, the feds indicted John Gotti, along with underboss Salvatore "Sammy the Bull" Gravano and consigliere Frank "Frankie Loc" Locascio on racketeering and murder conspiracy charges. In a shocking move, Gravano turned state's witness and testified against his boss. Gravano was sentenced to 20 years in prison for 19 murders and he served less than five. In 1992, Gotti was convicted on murder and racketeering charges, and is serving a life sentence in a federal prison in Marion, IL. His son, John Gotti Jr., is currently the acting boss of the Gambino family. The elder Gotti would like for his son to remain as boss, but the national commission of LCN will not allow it because John Jr. is known to have a quick temper and is not thought of to be as strong a leader as his father. Late last year, Jerry Capeci, a writer for the N.Y. Daily News, reported that Gambino capo Nicholas "Little Nick" Corozzo was chosen by the commission to take over for Gotti after one last chance for legal appeals. The

appeals failed, but Corozzo was then indicted on racketeering charges while in Florida, and he is currently incarcerated in New York City along with fellow Gambino capo Leonard DiMaria. The Gambinos were the strongest family in the city only seven or eight years ago, but now they are at a key time that will determine how far they go in the future. The latest news on the Gambinos is that Nick Corozzo entered a guilty plea to the charges in Florida and will face around 10 years in prison. This plea eliminates him from the choices for the new boss and leaves John Gotti, Jr. as the only candidate remaining. It is being said that Junior Gotti has been adapting to the role and lowering his public image. He is learning from the elder statesmen in the family. He does not want the same predicament as his infamous father. Junior Gotti was recently indicted, along with a few other members of the family, in a big RICO case. He has been held without bail. He is being represented by the same lawyers that defended his father, Gerald Shargel and Bruce Cutler. Those two were banned from the elder Gotti's last trial because they were considered house counsel for the Gambino family. There has been no trial date set for Gotti, Jr.

GENOVESE

The Genovese family's first boss was Giuseppe "Joe the Boss" Masseria. He became the boss of bosses after the murder of Salvatore D'Aquila. He ruled until 1931. He was succeeded by one of the most famous mobsters in history, Charlie "Lucky" Luciano. He got the nickname Lucky because he was assaulted by a rival gang and was left for dead, but he survived and gained even more power. Luciano was in power until he was forced to go to Sicily in 1936 because of criminal charges against him in New York City. Luciano was succeeded by Frank Costello. Costello was a close friend of Luciano's and kept the power in the family that Luciano had. He remained in power until he was shot in the head by Vincent "Chin" Gigante who was on orders from Vito Genovese. The next boss of the family was its namesake, Vito Genovese. He was in charge for four years, until 1959. The family was then ruled by a three man "ruling council". This consisted of Tommy Eboli, Jerry Catena, and Mike Miranda. They were in power until 1972. Frank "Funzi" Tieri took over then. Funzi was the boss for nine years. He died in 1981. Phillip Lombardo became the boss in 1981. He was replaced only a few weeks after he took over. Anthony "Fat Tony" Salerno became the family's boss from 1981 to 1987. He was jailed in 1987 on racketeering charges, and he was replaced by the current boss, Vincent "Chin" Gigante. Gigante was convicted in the summer of a series of racketeering charges. His sentencing date is in late November. The acting boss of the family, Liborio "Barney" Bellomo, entered a guilty plea to charges of extortion for the role of the Genovese family in the San Gennaro festival. The street boss of the Genovese family during Gigante's incarceration is Dominick "Quiet Dom" Cirillo. He has been compared to Gigante in that he is one of the experienced men in the family. He rarely conducts business over the telephone. He is very cautious about his meeting places. Many people expect the family to continue their prosperous ways under Cirillo.

LUCHESE

The Luchese family was first led by Gaetano Reina. He was in control until 1930. From 1930 to 1953, the family was led by Gaetano Gagliano. He was on the original National commission of La Cosa Nostra. From 1953 to 1967, Gaetano "Thomas" Luchese headed the family. Luchese's main racket was the garment industry. He worked closely with Carlo Gambino and his family in this area. He headed the family during its most powerful days. One of his capos was Paul Vario, who is the basis for the character of Paul Cicero in the movie GoodFellas. Henry Hill was an associate of the Lucheses as well as Jimmy "the Gent" Burke. Luchese turned over his interests in the garment industry to Thomas Gambino, Carlo's son and Luchese's son in law. Carmine Tramunti took over the family after Luchese's death in 1967. He ruled for seven years, until his

imprisonment on murder charges. Anthony Corallo became the new don. Corallo was named "Tony Ducks" because of all the times that he ducked prosecution. He stabilized the family, and was the head for twelve years. He died in 1986. He was succeeded by Vittorio Amuso, who served until 1992, when he was convicted and given a life sentence for RICO crimes. The first street boss during Amuso's incarceration was Alfonse "Little Al" D'Arco. D'Arco gained fame for flipping and turning government's witness. The acting boss of the family is Joe De Fede. De Fede will have a tough job to rebuild this family, which has seen its membership drop from about 125 in the 1970's to less than 100 at the current time. The family has also been hurt by having its members rat on the family. Three prominent members of the family have done this in the 1990's. They include D'Arco, former underboss Anthony "Gaspipe" Casso, and former capo Peter "Fat Pete" Chiodo. Joe De Fede will have to keep his soldiers in line if the family is to move back into prominence.

COLOMBO

Joe Profaci was the first boss of this family that originally beared his name. He ruled from 1930 to 1962. He was a very prominent boss. Profaci was frequently in the papers, and he liked the attention. The only problem he ever encountered was when a lieutenant, Crazy Joey Gallo, launched an all out war against his boss in an attempt to gain control of the family. However, Gallo did not have much support, and he was soon defeated by Profaci's faction of the family. Joseph Magliocco took over after Profaci's death, but he died in 1963. Joe Colombo took over, and quickly became known in the city. He ruled until 1971, when he was shot at an Italian-American Day rally which he had helped to plan. Colombo was killed by a single gunman, a black man named Jerome Johnson. Many people thought he was a lone nut who had killed Colombo for no apparent reason, but the real man behind the murder was Carlo Gambino. Gambino was angry at Colombo for all of the press that he was attracting. Colombo was in a coma for seven years, but died in 1978. Joseph Yacovelli took over after this and ruled for two years. Joseph Brancato was in charge for five months in 1973, but he was jailed on murder charges, so he gave up control of the family to Thomas DiBella. He negotiated peace with the remaining members of the faction of the family that was headed by Crazy Joey Gallo. He was deposed of in 1978 by Carmine Persico. Persico, also known as "Junior", was given the nickname "the Snake" by the media because of his ability to get out of certain situations. Persico was convicted on racketeering charges and given a 100 year sentence. The Colombo family split into two factions in the mid-80's. One faction supported the imprisoned Persico. The other faction was loyal to the acting boss of the family, Vic Orena. In 1992, Orena was convicted of racketeering. This event was the start of the Colombo war. Members of each faction were killing each other. The war even included the controversial capo Greg Scarpa, a Persico soldier. Scarpa had acquired AIDS during a blood transfusion a few years before. It was suspected, and later learned to be true, that Scarpa was an FBI informant during the war. This didn't hamper his efforts, though, as he participated in the murders of at least eight other people. It was obvious that Persico wanted his nephew, Alfonse to take over the family. Persico won the war when he was allowed to appoint his nephew, Andrew Russo, as the acting boss of the family. Russo held this for a few months and was named the permanent boss just before a racketeering indictment was leveled against him. It is not known if Alfonse "Allie Boy" Persico will move to be the power in the family that his father has controlled for so long.

BONANNO

Cola Schiro was the first boss of the Bonanno family. He was the boss until 1930. He was succeeded by Salvatore Maranzano. Maranzano was the boss of bosses until the other mobsters grew weary of his power and a few of them, including

Charlie Luciano, conspired to murder him in 1931. After his death, Luciano formed the National Commission of La Cosa Nostra. Joe Bonanno succeeded Maranzano as the family boss, and he was in power until 1964. He was the first ever boss to break the omerta. He did not testify against his friends, however he wrote a book that described his life as the boss of a crime family. Frank LaBruzzo was the don for the next two years. Gaspare DiGregorio followed with a two year rule of his own. Paul Sciacca was in power from 1966 to 1966. A ruling council of Phillip "Rusty" Rastelli, Joseph Zicarelli, Joseph DiFillippi, and Natale Evola was in control for three years. Evola then became the sole boss for a year. Rastelli was the boss from late 1973 to 1974, until he was incarcerated on racketeering charges. Carmine Galante was the boss until his murder in 1979. Galante, known for smoking his cigars, was murdered at Joe and Mary's Italian Restaurant in Brooklyn. He still had his cigar in his mouth when he died. One of his bodyguards, a Sicilian named Caesar Bonaventre, was said to have been involved in the assassination of his boss. After Galante's death, Bonaventre became the youngest capo in history at the age of 24. Phillip "Rusty" Rastelli got out of jail and resumed control of the family. Two of his top aides were Dominick "Sonny Black" Napolitano and Benjamin "Lefty Guns" Ruggiero. They are the two main mobsters that FBI agent Joseph D. Pistone was working with in his top secret undercover role as jewel thief "Donnie Brasco". Napolitano disappeared after it was found that Brasco was an agent. Ruggiero was put in jail and died of lung cancer about two years after his release from prison in 1992. Rastelli was imprisoned again in 1985 as a result of the Commission case, and in 1989 he gave up the leadership position in the family to Joey Massino. Massino has brought back some prominence to the family. He is still in control of the family.